



# SUNDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2021

## DIOCESE OF Hexham & Newcastle

**The Parishes of:** Bishop Auckland || Newton Aycliffe & Shildon || Willington  
Crook, Tow Law & Wolsingham || Tudhoe || Coundon, Ferryhill & Windlestone

### ESCOMB PARTNERSHIP NOTE

#### The First Sunday of Advent (C): Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

Paddy was furious. This wasn't new. He gets furious every year when the lights and music of Christmas come early and drown out Advent. The commercialism of Christmas leapfrogs over this sacred time of waiting and preparation.

Advent is, can be or even should be a real workshop of the Spirit. A time to pause amid the cranked-up drumbeat of seasonal advertising and 'must have' labels pushing us to part with our cash. Sadly, it becomes a stressful time for many people. So why not strike a blow for freedom and claim some time to contemplate what it's all really about? Look at what and who is driving your life and make a note to care for yourself.

On a good day we can be competent organisers. We plan ahead. We make arrangements realistically. We make things happen. You may be frankly in survival mode for the next few weeks. Giving yourself a breather may be a luxury but we each need it. It's what Advent is for.

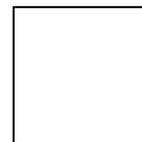
The people in the early days of the Church had to change their expectations. Their hopes of Jesus returning in glory had begun to flag. Without losing a keen sense of Jesus being already present among us, they learnt to savour all he had done during his time with us on earth. They also maintained a longing for his return.

We are their successors. But we're more bombarded and cluttered than they were. We live in and are surrounded by a secular world. Our spiritual life can become starved in comparison to the attention and time we give to more mundane pursuits. Jesus pointed out that "The children of this world are more shrew in dealing with their own kind than are the children of light". (Luke 16:8). Advent is the gifted time for us to right the balance.

We can avoid the mismatch of professing our faith in Jesus and our daily behaviours not reflecting his kingdom's values. Advent time is for standing aside and making adjustments, having a re-think, and longing to return to the blueprint of being made stunningly in the image and likeness of God.

The Lord returns every time we love, share, forgive or show compassion, when we go the extra mile or turn the other cheek. We show our thanks for the bounty of creation when we reduce our carbon footprint and care for our common home.

Not exploiting the earth or any individual should also alert us to being exploited ourselves by colluding with the attractions of the moment. Pause. Be of good heart. Christ has overcome the world.



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#### A message from the Pope

Certain economically prosperous countries tend to be proposed as cultural models for less developed countries; instead, each of those countries should be helped to grow in its own distinct way and to develop its capacity for innovation while respecting the values of its proper culture. A shallow and pathetic desire to imitate others leads to copying and consuming in place of creating, and fosters low national self-esteem. In the affluent sectors of many poor countries, and at times in those who have recently emerged from poverty, there is a resistance to native ways of thinking and acting, and a tendency to look down on one's own cultural identity, as if it were the sole cause of every ill.

Destroying self-esteem is an easy way to dominate others. Behind these trends that tend to level our world, there flourish powerful interests that take advantage of such low self-esteem, while attempting, through the media and networks, to create a new culture in the service of the elite. This plays into the opportunism of financial speculators and raiders, and the poor always end up the losers. Then too, ignoring the culture of their people has led to the inability of many political leaders to devise an effective development plan that could be freely accepted and sustained over time.

- *Fratelli Tutti* 51-52